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NICNAME/WHOIS

INTRODUCTION

The NICNAME/WHOIS Server is an NCP/TCP transaction based query/response server, running on the SRI-NIC machine, that provides netwide directory service to ARPANET users. It is one of a series of ARPANET/Internet name services maintained by the Network Information Center (NIC) at SRI International on behalf of the Defense Communications Agency (DCA). The server is accessible across the ARPANET from user programs running on local hosts, and it delivers the full name, U.S. mailing address, telephone number, and network mailbox for ARPANET users.

This server, together with the corresponding Identification Data Base provides online directory look-up equivalent to the ARPANET Directory. DCA strongly encourages network hosts to provide their users with access to this network service.

WHO SHOULD BE IN THE DATA BASE

DCA requests that each individual with a directory on an ARPANET host, who is capable of passing traffic across the ARPANET, be registered in the NIC Identification Data Base. To register, send full name, middle initial, U.S. mailing address (including mail stop and full explanation of abbreviations and acronyms), ZIP code, telephone (including Autovon and FTS, if available), and one network mailbox, via electronic mail to NIC@SRI-NIC.

PROTOCOL

The NICNAME protocol is similar to the NAME/FINGER protocol (RFC 742). To access the server:

Connect to the service host (SRI-NIC)
   TCP: service port 43 decimal
   NCP: ICP to socket 43 decimal, establishing two 8-bit connections

Send a single "command line", ending with <CRLF>.

Receive information in response to the command line. The server closes its connections as soon as the output is finished.

EXISTING USER PROGRAMS

NICNAME has been chosen as the global name for the user program, although some sites may choose to use the more familiar name of "WHOIS". There are versions of NICNAME for Tenex, Tops-20, and Unix. The Tenex and Tops-20 programs are written in assembly language (FAIL/MACRO), and the Unix version is written in C. They are easy to invoke, taking one argument which is passed directly to the NICNAME server at SRI-NIC. Normally it is best to use the NIC-supplied programs, if possible, since the protocol will continue to evolve. Contact NIC@SRI-NIC for copies.

COMMAND LINES AND REPLIES

A command line is normally a single name specification. The easiest way to obtain the most recent documentation on name specifications is to give the server a command line consisting of "?<CRLF>" (that is, a question-mark alone as the name specification). The response from the NICNAME server will list all possible formats that can be used.

The responses are not currently intended to be machine-readable; the information is meant to be passed back directly to a human user. The following three examples will illustrate the use of NICNAME.

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Command line: ?
Response:
      Please enter a name or a handle ("ident"), such as "Smith"
   or "SRI-NIC".  Starting with a period forces a name-only
   search;
   starting with exclamation point forces handle-only.  Examples:
      Smith                    [looks for name or handle SMITH ]
      !SRI-NIC                 [looks for handle SRI-NIC only  ]
      .Smith, John             [looks for name JOHN SMITH only ]
   Adding "..." to the argument will match anything from that
   point,
   e.g. "ZU..." will match ZUL, ZUM, etc.
      To have the ENTIRE membership list of a group or
   organization,
   if you are asking about a group or org, shown with the record,
   use
   an asterisk character "*" directly preceding the given
   argument.
   [CAUTION: If there are a lot of members this will take a long
   time!]
   You may of course use exclamation point and asterisk, or a
   period
   and asterisk together.
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Command line: dyer
Response:
   Dyer, David A. (DAD2)   DDYER@USC-ISIB  (213) 822-1511
   Dyer, Fred S. (FSD)  Dyer@RADC-MULTICS  (315) 330-7275
   Dyer, Mary K. (MARY)   DYER@SRI-NIC     (415) 859-4775
   Dyer, William R. (WRD)   WRDyer@RADC-MULTICS  (315) 330-7791

Command line: mary
Response:
   Dyer, Mary K. (MARY)          DYER@SRI-NIC
   SRI International
   Network Information Center
   Telecommunications Sciences Center
   333 Ravenswood Avenue
   Menlo Park, California 94025
   Phone: (415) 859-4775
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